

Direct Mail Case Study, McGraw-Hill

## McGraw-Hill does the math...and gets an A+ in special event promotion.

SRA/McGraw-Hill's grade-school instructional products have always been based on proven educational research. This has gained importance as a selling proposition thanks to legislation like the "No Child Left Behind Act." More than ever before, federal and state governments are demanding proof of scholastic achievement and progress—and teachers and school administrators are attracted to products that have been rigorously researched and tested.

By co-sponsoring the high-profile National Math Symposium, SRA/McGraw-Hill had an opportunity to further position itself as a thought leader in the field of elementary mathematics education and research. At the symposium, the company would have in-person access to very high-profile state- and district-level superintendents, school board presidents, curriculum / instruction directors and others.

Our objective was to help drive attendance to the invitation-only event to be held in northern California. We faced some obstacles: while SRA/McGraw-Hill would pay for ground transportation to and from the airport, neither airfare nor lodging was included. And it's often difficult for government employees to get approval for out-of-state travel.

Our strategy was to emphasize the prestige associated with the symposium, which was co-sponsored by The George Lucas Educational Foundation and Edutopia, and held at George Lucas' private Skywalker Ranch. The ranch is rarely opened for events, so visiting this renowned facility would likely be a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity.



Working in partnership with our client, we developed creative that looked as prestigious and important as the symposium itself. This included a high-end direct-mail invitation—mailed first class—that incorporated textured paper and a custom logo. (The logo was also used on collateral, press pieces, leather binders and other materials used throughout the symposium.) Copy emphasized the exclusive nature of the event, which was limited to 250 attendees, and the rare opportunity to visit the Skywalker Ranch. The invitation also presented a list of nationally respected educators and researchers who would be in attendance.

Mailed to 13,500 targets—with follow-up e-mails to approximately half the list—the invitation drew 172 registrants, over 88% of whom attended the symposium.

SRA/McGraw-Hill easily achieved their goal of positioning the symposium as a prestigious, must-attend event, as reported in the El Dorado (Arkansas) News-Times: "When El Dorado School District Math Chair Tom Simmons received an invitation to the ranch to mingle with leading figures in the field of math education, he and several others leapt at the chance."

"Any time you have the opportunity to be around our nation's movers and shakers...just having all of them in one place (is a positive thing)," Simmons said. "It was good to step back and take a look at the big picture."

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